

582 women marry. Under the old conditions of frequent warfare there
[575] was a shortage of men. The most desirable girls were chosen first and became head wives, after which the surplus was absorbed by plural marriages. Today, when the sexes are more nearly equal in numbers, plural marriages seem to be on the wane.

584 Among the Menabe, marriages were formerly arranged by the
• parents. Children were usually married young, before they had formed strong preferences. The consent of the child was not necessary, but old people say that it was considered cruel to force a child into a distasteful union and that such a thing was very rare in practice. Usually the young people were indifferent. At the present time marriages are arranged by the parties themselves, with the consent of their parents and the village council. They come to an agreement before notifying the old people. The natives approve of the new method and say that such unions are more permanent than the old type. Among the Ikonga, marriages are usually arranged by the young people, with the consent of their parents.

Courting takes place in the children's houses already described. Most of it is public. The boy and girl are rarely alone together for long, since the girl's brothers, sisters and friends are constantly dropping in. There is often spicy repartee and a certain amount of good-natured horse play, but little physical love making. The boy may make small gifts to the girl, but this does not seem to be necessary. At the present time matches are sometimes arranged in a few hours between boys and girls from different villages who have met at feasts or while traveling.

In arranging marriages economic considerations seem to be uppermost in the minds of even the young people. In general, a man is content if he gets a wife who is strong and industrious while a woman is satisfied with any hard working husband, the richer the better. Only ordinary congeniality is expected. What little romance there is seems to be practically limited to first marriages. Plural wives are taken on purely economic grounds and have to pass the scrutiny of the first wife.

Romantic are universally considered fools. Nevertheless, I heard of a few love matches in which couples had married in the face of opposition and to their economic disadvantage. If such a match is forbidden by the parents, the children will do everything possible to change their stand. Failing this, they will begin to have intercourse surreptitiously and continue until the girl becomes pregnant. The boy will then present an ox to the girl's father, if

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he can afford it, and tell him that she is bearing his child. The 584 father will then consent to the marriage, to avoid scandal. Such conduct is considered reprehensible and the relatives on both sides will scold the couple. However, the trouble soon blows over and has no permanent effect on the social status of the pair.

Although marriages rarely begin in romantic attachments, affection 593 between married people is common and seems to increase with age. Quarrels between husband and wife are rare. They are drawn together by their love for their children and by their common economic interests. Divorce, although very easy, seems to be much 596 less frequent than among ourselves.

The degrees of relationship within which marriage is proscribed 592 have been discussed under Social Organization. However, the force of the proscription varies. In addition to the absolutely forbidden degrees, there are certain relatives whose marriage is considered a semi-incest, likely to have bad results. This applies particularly to the descendants of two brothers. To remove the danger it is thought well to perform a ceremony to remove the ban.

Among the Ilongo this ban-lifting ceremony is called *fajy*. The 592 man provides one ox if the relationship is remote or two if it is close. 762 The animals are thrown and tied on the east side of the father's house, with their heads toward the east. The head of the lineage cuts their throats, invoking the gods and ancestors and explaining the reason for the sacrifice. The sacrificial parts are cooked and offered and the rest of the meat cut up and distributed raw to the members of both families involved. The man takes the heart and squeezes a few drops of blood from it on the forehead of the girl. She then takes it and does the same to him. After this the ban is lifted and they will have a prosperous life together.

Among the Menaka the ban-lifting ceremony is only compulsory when a man marries the daughter of his mother's sister's son, but it is thought advisable when he marries his father's brother's daughter or granddaughter. In ancient times an ox was killed and the couple sprinkled with the blood. This ceremony is now obsolete and the ritual has been forgotten. At present, the head of the lineage puts water in a wooden dish with a silver bracelet and scrapings of the *houmoupe* (see Prayer and Sacrifice). He asperges the couple with the water three or six times, usually six, counting as he does so. He then invokes the gods and ancestors and announces: "These two [giving the names] wish to marry. They are forced to this by love and by the difficulty of finding mates of the allowed degree."

- 571 Please pardon them and let them have children, both boys and girls.
 712 We ourselves have pardoned them, so that punishment for the infraction of the taboo may be averted." After this they may marry safely. If they marry without the ceremony, they will both become ill, or will be sterile, or any children born to them will die in infancy.

CEREMONIES OF BRETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

- 514 Among the Tanala Ikaingo the formalities of marriage are as follows: When a couple have decided to marry they notify their respective parents. Before giving consent the parents investigate: 1. The conduct of the future husband or wife. 2. Whether the person is free from other attachments. Previous wives are, of course, no bar to the union. 3. Whether the couple are within the prohibited degrees of relationship. If both families are content, the boy sends one or two men of his family, or close friends, to ask for the girl. The emissary does this in a set speech and when the offer has been accepted, presents her father with the *fiasho* or bride price. This consists of rum, spears, etc., and is usually fairly large. The marriage is not legal unless the bride price has been paid.

From the moment the *fiasho* has been given and received the girl is considered bound. No one else may ask for her in marriage. She continues to live with her parents for about a month, during which time she weaves the mats, baskets, etc., necessary for the new establishment. At the same time the prospective husband prepares the house and makes the wooden utensils. He visits her from time to time, working for her parents and especially bringing them firewood. This period of service is called *talo-izany*. The young people may begin to have sexual relations as soon as the bride price has been paid.

- 315 When everything is ready for the new home a medicine-man is called in to indicate an auspicious day for the final ceremony. On this day the man sends three men and three women of his family to get the girl. These are called *espanakato*. When they arrive at the father-in-law's house there is an exchange of speeches. Finally the father-in-law counsels his daughter to behave well in her new home and invokes the gods and ancestral spirits, asking them to protect the couple and give them children. A simple meal is then served. After this the girl and the *espanakato* start to the husband's house, the *espanakato* carrying the luggage. This consists of mats and baskets, pounded rice, dried meat, etc.

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523 500775A.L.O.--ending (e. g., preferred time and place, ceremonial, persons attending and officiating); symbolic rites; means of securing publicity and legality (e. g., taxes, licenses); civil and ecclesiastical weddings; variations dependent upon status; associated property transactions (e. g., transfer of gifts, of bride-price); betrothing of bridal couple; consummation (e. g., immediate or deferred, private or public); defloratio ritus (e. g., jux prima nocte); concerns for virginity of bride (e. g., exhibiting tokens); post-wedding events (e. g., honeymoon, exchange of vows); status and activities of newly married persons; etc. See also:

marriage ceremony 49 Customs in marriage 50

582 were Tanala prisoners of war whose antecedents were well known.
567 If the slave came of a good family, the fact that he or she was a slave carried little social stigma and the children would be accepted as equals by their relatives.

[585] In unions of commoners and slaves there was no marriage ceremony. If a common man took a slave woman as a concubine, her status was not changed unless a child was born to them. After this, the father was in honor bound to buy her and their child from her owner. He would usually free both of them by calling together his family and pronouncing a curse on anyone who thenceforth considered them as slaves. If he did this, the child inherited his gens and rank: If he failed to do it the child and mother remained slaves and might be sold by his heirs after his death.

If a woman who had been captured and enslaved bore a child to her master, her relatives might remove her slave status by paying a partial ransom. This was called *lojalempenana* ("to replace carrying the bamboo") in reference to the long bamboo bottles used by slave women for carrying water. It was usually about half the [435] woman's market value as a slave, perhaps four to six head of cattle. The payment of this ransom not only freed the woman and her offspring, but gave her an honorable position in the household equal to that of any of the regularly married wives.

Marriages between common women and slave men were less frequent, but by no means unknown. Middle-aged widows who [587] wished to be only wives frequently took slave husbands. The first step was to buy the man, if he belonged to someone else. The woman then made a feast, killed an ox and distributed the meat to her relatives, and announced that this man was henceforth free and her husband. The wife had a whip hand in such unions. The husband, even though officially free, could not return to his own people. Moreover, [589] if he behaved badly or paid attention to other women, his wife could reduce him to slavery again and even sell him.

567 Children of common women and slave men took the gens and rank of the mother. However, if the father was a Tanala and had been a man of good family, or a noble, before his enslavement, the children might go back to his people when they were grown and could legitimately claim his gens and rank.

RELATIONSHIP TERMS

601 The Tanala system of relationship terms is comparatively simple. It was impossible to get an authoritative list of the terms used by

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CEREMONIES OF BETHOHAL AND MARRIAGE

- 514 Among the Tanala Ikongo the formalities of marriage are as follows: When a couple have decided to marry they notify their respective parents. Before giving consent the parents investigate: 1. The conduct of the future husband or wife. 2. Whether the person is free from other attachments. Previous wives are, of course, no bar to the union. 3. Whether the couple are within the prohibited degrees of relationship. If both families are content, the boy sends one or two men of his family, or close friends, to ask for the girl. The emissary does this in a set speech and when the offer has been accepted, presents her father with the *shosha* or bride price. This consists of rum, spears, etc., and is usually fairly large. The marriage is not legal unless the bride price has been paid.

From the moment the *shosha* has been given and received the girl is considered bound. No one else may ask for her in marriage. She continues to live with her parents for about a month, during which time she weaves the mats, baskets, etc., necessary for the new establishment. At the same time the prospective husband prepares the house and makes the wooden utensils. He visits her from time to time, working for her parents and especially bringing them firewood. This period of service is called *lao-lao*. The young people may begin to have sexual relations as soon as the bride price has been paid.

- 585 When everything is ready for the new home a medicine-man is called in to indicate an auspicious day for the final ceremony. On this day the man sends three men and three women of his family to get the girl. These are called *sepanakato*. When they arrive at the father-in-law's house there is an exchange of speeches. Finally the father-in-law counsels his daughter to behave well in her new home and invokes the gods and ancestral spirits, asking them to protect the couple and give them children. A simple meal is then served. After this the girl and the *sepanakato* start to the husband's house, the *sepanakato* carrying the baggage. This consists of mats and baskets, pounded rice, dried meat, etc.

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The bride goes first to the house of the husband's father. She is seated near the fireplace, on the west side, while the husband sits near it on the north side. That evening the whole family eat together and the couple sleep in the father's house. The next afternoon they go to their own house. The wife prepares a meal with the food she has brought and invites the husband's family and all the important people in the village to attend. After the meal there is drinking and jollification. The husband usually presents her with an ox at this time.

Among the Tanala Menabe marriage is as follows: After the couple have agreed and told their parents, the boy's father goes to the house of the girl's father accompanied by two or three relatives, men or women. He makes the following speech: "I have come because our children love each other. Since the offspring of animals are to be caught in the forest while the offspring of men are to be found in the village, we have come to this house to catch this young girl. We have come to your house to ask for the hand of your daughter." The girl's parents will always receive the delegation, but they can refuse the request if they wish. If they accept, the betrothal ceremony is held the same day, in their house. The young couple are seated together on a mat facing east, the eastern door of the house being open. The relatives on both sides form a circle about them. The father of the boy pays the bride price to the girl's father. It is usually small. After the latter has received it, he takes a bowl of water in his hands and, facing the east, calls on the gods in regular order, as for a sacrifice. He then says: "We call you not to eat or to drink rum, but simply to assist at the marriage of these young people who love each other. Bless them and give them long life and good health. Let them have many children and grant them success in all undertakings." He then asperges the couple six times with water from the bowl, counting aloud until he comes to *esusa* ("six") when he says: "*Eya Asasia, eya transomonana.*" This is a regular formula meaning approximately: "May you have good fortune and life." He then calls the ancestral spirits and goes through the same procedure.

This ceremony is now considered a betrothal and prelude to the real marriage, but some of my informants said that there was no other ceremony in ancient times. After the betrothal the young people are free to have sexual relations, but the match may still be broken off. This rarely occurs, for it is considered disgraceful to the family doing so.

585 After the betrothal the girl continues to live with her parents, sometimes for as much as two months. The period is not fixed and in the Zafimaniry gene her relatives try to prolong it as much as possible. The boy visits her and sleeps with her. She spends her time in making her part of the equipment for the new house: mats, baskets, and a raffia mosquito net and pillows. The boy prepares the house and his share of the equipment. On an auspicious day a number of the boy's relatives go to get the girl. The two families usually agree on the number in advance, so that each will know how many people they will have to feast. The girl's family feasts the delegation at her house. An equal number of her relatives then accompany her to the boy's house, where they are feasted in turn. After the feast, all her relatives go home. The young people live with the groom's father for a week, then go to their own house. Among the Zafimaniry the bride, on entering the house of her parents-in-law for the first time, presents them with her best mat and receives their thanks and blessing.

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The ceremonies are the same for plural as for first marriages, but are usually somewhat less elaborate, with smaller feasts. The same holds for remarriages of widows or divorced women.

PLURAL MARRIAGES

837 Polyandry is mentioned in some Tanala legends, but it is interwoven with other fabulous details and there is no reason to believe that it ever existed as a recognized institution. In making the *emfampespa* ("blood brotherhood") pact, men often agree to hold their wives in common, but they rarely if ever do this when they live in the same village. The community of wives, therefore, resolves itself into reciprocal sexual hospitality. This is operative even during the absence of the husband.

595 Polygyny is still common. Under the old regime there was no limit to the number of wives the king might have. The last king of Ambobimanga had thirty-three. Other men are limited to four but rarely take the full quota. The number depends on their wealth and personal desirability.

It is permissible for a man to marry sisters as plural wives, but there is some feeling against it and it is rare. It is believed that sisters will be more jealous of each other than wives who come from different families. The Zafindriantsova gene has prohibited the practice in recent years, due to one sister having poisoned another who was a fellow wife.